Strategy to prevent starvation deaths

488. PROF. A. LAKSHMI SAGAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider to formulate a strategy involving the State Governments to ensure that the tragedy of starvation deaths is not perpetuated by normal disasters like droughts and floods especially when the grainaries are overflowing; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) the Government have taken a number of steps to ensure availability of foodgrains for the poor which have been mentioned in the annexed statement.

Statement

Steps to ensure availability of food grains to the poor

The Government have taken to following steps to ensure availability of foodgrains to the poor :

1. The allocation of foodgrains to BPL families under TPDS was increased from 10 kg to 20 kg per family per month from April, 2000 and further increased to 25 kgs per family per month from July 2001.
2. The basis of allocation of foodgrains for BPL families was changed to the population projections of the Registrar General as on 1.3.2000 instead of the projected population of 1995.
3. Foodgrains at CIP applicable for BPL families are now made available for all welfare schemes, namely Annapurana, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, wheat based Nutrition Programme, supply of foodgrains to SC/ST/ OBC Hostels and indigent people living in welfare institutions such as begger homes, orphanges and nari niketans etc., implemented by various Ministries/Departments of Government of India.
4. 27.64 lakh tonnes of foodgrains have been allotted free of cost to Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan for undertaking Food for Work Programmes in the drought/flood affected areas.

5. Special additional allocation of foodgrains to drought affected States at BPL rates for distribution to drought affected families (both APL and BPL) at the rate of 20 kg per family per month for a period of 3 months have been made to the Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan.

6. The Government have also launched Antyodaya Anna Yojana for the poorest of the poor and allocations under the Scheme have started from March, 2001. The Scheme which was announced by the Prime Minister on 25.12.2000 provide for availability of 25 kgs of foodgrains to each eligible family at highly subsidised rates—Rs. 2 a kg for wheat and Rs. 3 a kg for rice. There are about 1 crore antyodaya families in the country. The identification of these families is carried out by the State Governments/UT Administrations from amongst the BPL families. So far allocations under this Scheme have been made to 28 States/UTs.

7. On 15th August, 2001 the Hon'ble Prime Minister announced launching of a universal Food for Work Programme in all the States/UTs for organising various employment generation programmes titled as "Sampoorn Gramin Rojgar Yojana". Under the Scheme 50 lakh tonnes of foodgrains will be allotted to the States/UTs free of cost annually.

Distribution of foodgrains to starving farmers

489. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farmers have raided FCI godowns in the drought hit areas of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the steps proposed to distribute food stocks lying with Government to starving farmers; and

(c) the number of starvation deaths reported during the Kharif season in the country, especially in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Government have taken a number of steps to ensure availability of foodgrains for the poor which have been mentioned in the Statement. [*Refer to the Statement appended to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 488.*]